

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman John Olver released the following statement after being sworn in as a Member of the 111th Congress:

"I am entering the new congress cautiously optimistic. I am excited by the possibilities, but also in awe of the number of things that need fixing. Nothing happens quickly or easily in Washington, especially when the challenges are as complex as they are now. But even with the challenges we are facing, there is a real sense of excitement in the Democratic party.

The most immediate task for the new congress will be helping struggling families hurt by the ailing economy. We will need to focus on creating jobs, ensuring access to quality healthcare, and building infrastructure, from bridges to broadband, that underpin a vibrant economy. You will also probably hear talk of articulating a robust energy policy that would create the "green economy" President-elect Obama has discussed. My guess is that most of the major initiatives you will see coming out of Washington will in some way tie into stimulating the economy and helping those who are struggling.

While specific votes have not yet been scheduled, there is a lot of energy for passing a second economic stimulus package, and perhaps taking up an expansion of children's health insurance coverage, early in the next Congress. Given the abysmal state of the economy, these priorities are good places to start.

Even with a Democrat in the White House and a Democratic majority in the House and Senate, change will not come easily or overnight. But what will be different this congress, and visible right from the start, is that we will have a President who will work on both sides of the aisle to comprehensively and thoughtfully address our country's problems that have been too long ignored."

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